

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9037

INFO AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 4475

LIMDIS

SAO PAULO PASS SIMON PARTY IN MANAUS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SHUM, OVIP, CI (SIMON, WILLIAM)

SUBJECT: SIMON VISIT: SECURITY FORCES PUNISHED FOR PRISONERS ABUSE

REF: (A) SANTIAGO 4341, (B) SANTIAGO A-34, (C) SANTIAGO 3128

1. SUMMARY: WHEN FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL AUTHORIZED SECRETARY SIMON TO CITE PUBLICLY GOC'S CLAIMS TO HAVE PUNISHED A NUMBER OF SECURITY FORCE MEMBERS FOR PRISONER ABUSES, HE OPENED THE DOOR TO OFFICIAL AND UNOFFICIAL INQUIRIES IN AN IMPORTANT HUMAN RIGHTS AREA. WHILE FINANCE MINISTER CAUAS PARTIALLY CLOSED THAT DOOR DURING THE MAY 7 PRESS CONFERENCE BY STATING NO NAMES WOULD BE RELEASED, WE SEE IT STILL AJAR. END SUMMARY.

2. AT THE MAY 7 MEETING BETWEEN CHILEAN CABINET OFFICERS AND SECRETARY SIMON (REF A), FOREIGN MINISTER CARVAJAL CLEARLY WANTED TO TABLE DATA SHOWING THAT THE GOC HAD PUNISHED PEOPLE FOR ABUSING PRISONERS. BUT IT WAS LATE IN THE MEETING BEFORE HE FOUND AN OPENING. CARVAJAL BEGAN BY OBSERVING THAT SECURITY FORCES THROUGHOUT THE WORLD OCCASIONALLY MISTREAT CITIZENS.

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HE SAID HE ONCE SHOWED USUN AMBASSADOR GOLDBERG A "NEW YORK

TIMES" ARTICLE NOTING THE CONVICTION OF THREE OR FOUR US POLICE. HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT SOME ABUSES HAD OCCURRED IN CHILE, BUT THE GOC WAS FIRMLY AGAINST SUCH ACTIVITY AND HAD TAKEN STEPS TO STOP IT. HE THEREUPON WITHDREW FROM HIS BRIEF-CASE A PIECE OF PAPER WHICH HE WAVED TOWARD THE SECRETARY BEFORE READING TERSELY FROM IT. HE SUMMARIZED BY RANK AND CRIME, MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY FORCES CONVICTED FOR MALTREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

3. SINCE HE DID NOT GIVE THE SECRETARY A COPY OF THE MEMORANDUM WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO RECONSTRUCT THE LIST FROM OUR NOTES AND MEMORY. ALTHOUGH NOT PRECISE IN EVERY PARTICULAR, IT CLOSELY RESEMBLES WHAT CARVAJAL SAID.

PERSONS	CRIME
TWO CORPORALS; TWO SOLDIERS	"QUASI-DELICTOS" WHICH WE TRANSLATE AS SEMI-CRIMES OR CRIMINAL TORT CASES
ONE CAPTAIN, ONE 2ND LIEUTENANT,	"QUASI-HOMICIDEIO"
THREE SAILORS	MANSLAUGHTER

SEVEN (?) PEOPLE, RANKS NOT RECALLED	"APREMIO" THREATS OR ILLEGAL PRESSURE
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ONE LIEUTENANT, TWO CORPORALS,	BODILY INJURY
SIXTEEN SOLDIERS	

TWO SERGEANTS, ONE CORPORAL AND ONE SOLDIER	UNNECESSARY VIOLENCE
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ONE SERGEANT, ONE SOLDIER	ASSAULT AND ILLEGAL ENTRY
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TOTAL 41.

4. SINCE WE HAD NO WAY OF CONFIRMING THAT THE CONVICTIONS ALL INVOLVED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES RELATED TO POLITICAL/SECURITY PRISONERS, THE SECRETARY REFERRED ONLY TO "A NUMBER" OF CONVICTIONS IN HIS OPENING STATEMENT AT PRESS CONFERENCE.

5. DURING THE PRESS CONFERENCE, THE LOCAL "TIME" STRINGER
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RECALLED THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH HAD COME UP LESS THAN YEAR AGO WHEN THE GOC SIMILARLY ALLEGED SECURITY FORCES HAD BEEN CONVICTED FOR PRISONER ABUSE. HE ASKED IF THE GOC WOULD RELEASE NAMES OF THOSE CONVICTED TO AVOID SIMILAR MISUNDERSTANDING. FINANCE MINISTER CAUAS QUICKLY FIELDLED THE QUESTION AND REPLIED THAT "CONDITIONS WITHIN THE COUNTRY AT THIS TIME" DID NOT PERMIT THE GOC TO RELEASE NAMES.

6. COMMENT: WASHINGTON AGENCIES WILL RECALL THAT IN THE EMBASSY'S ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT (REF B) WE HAD SAID LACK OF INFORMATION INDICATING GOC PUNISHING THOSE GUILTY OF MISTREATING, KILLING AND TORTURING PRISONERS WAS PRINCIPAL REASON FOR OUR CONCLUSION THAT GOC CONDONED SUCH ACTIVITIES. SUBSEQUENTLY WE UNCOVERED A CURRENT CASE (REF C) INVOLVING CARABINEROS ACCUSED OF MURDERING THEIR CAPTIVES IN EARLY 1974. IF THE GOC COULD PRODUCE VERIFIABLE RECORD ESTABLISHING THAT RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN AND ARE BEING METED OUT SIGNIFICANT PUNISHMENT FOR ABUSING PRISONERS, ITS PROTESTATIONS THAT IT ABHORS SUCH PRACTICES WOULD BE MUCH MORE CREDIBLE.

7. THE BREAKDOWN PROVIDED BY CARVAJAL, ALTHOUGH SPARSE, DOES PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO PURSUE THE ISSUE QUIETLY AND OFFICIALLY AS WELL AS OPENING THE WAY FOR RENEWED MEDIA INVESTIGATION OF THE ISSUE. "WASHINGTON POST" REPORTER JOANN OMANG ATTEMPTED TO PIN DOWN PRESIDENT PINOCHET ON THIS SUBJECT IN MARCH 1975 AFTER HE STATED PUBLICLY THAT TORTURERS HAD BEEN JAILED. THE RESULTS WERE HARDLY SATISFACTORY FROM ANYONE'S POINT OF VIEW. THIS TIME, PERHAPS, THE GOC IS MORE AWARE OF ITS DILEMMA AND WILL HANDLE INQUIRIES MORE EFFECTIVELY.

8. WE REMAIN SKEPTICAL ABOUT THE IMPORT OF THE CARVAJAL LIST. IT DOES NOT INCLUDE EITHER ANY RANKING OFFICERS OR CIVILIANS; THE CRIMES ARE ILL-DEFINED AND COULD ENCOMPASS A VARIETY OF ARBITRARY POLICE ACTIVITY COMPLETELY UNRELATED TO THE POLITICAL PRISONERS; AND THE SENTENCES MAY BEAR NO RESEMBLANCE TO THE SEVERITY OF THE OFFENSE. NONETHELESS, WE HOPE TO PURSUE THIS SUBJECT QUIETLY WITH THE GOC AS OPPORTUNITIES ARISE. SECRETARY SIMON'S TRIP LEFT THE DOOR AJAR FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION OF A VERY SIGNIFICANT ASPECT OF THE CHILEAN HUMAN RIGHTS PROBLEM.

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